

BEYOND THE BOOKS EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

The mission of Beyond the Books Educational Foundation (BTBEF) is to fund innovative enrichment programs, for the students of Bloomington District 87 and McLean County Unit District No. 5 Public Schools.

INFORMATION for ALL GRANT APPLICATIONS submitted

December 2, 2024 - March 3, 2025

ELIGIBILITY

- Applicants must be employees of District 87 and/or Unit 5. Both certified and support staff are eligible to receive grant awards.
- Grants will be awarded without regard to an applicant's school district, race, age, creed, gender or national origin.
- In the event the recipient relocates to another position, school, or out-of-district, the grant may be withdrawn. However, if it can be demonstrated that the project will be carried out as envisioned within District 87 and/or Unit 5, the grant may be retained with BTBEF approval.
- Prior grant recipients are eligible to apply.

GRANT TYPES AND FUNDING AMOUNTS

- **BEYOND THE BOX:** One grant in an amount between **\$7,500 and \$10,000** will be awarded in this category for an exceptional proposal. The \$7500 - \$10,000 award is given by a private foundation to *Beyond the Books Educational Foundation* and BTBEF selects the winner.
- **STANDARD:** Grants awarded in this category are limited to requests for **\$801 to \$5000**.
- **MINI:** Grants awarded in this category are limited to **\$800 or less**.
- You may submit applications with the same proposal in both the Standard and Beyond the Box categories. If you choose to do so, you must use the same title for both applications and within the Beyond the Box application, clearly explain how the extra money would be used. Only one of the two applications may receive an award.

SUBMISSION

- Applications **MUST** be submitted via *SM Apply*. Alternate submissions (via USPS, email, etc.) will **NOT** be accepted. Log in or register here to apply: <https://beyondthebooks.smapply.org/>.
- *SM Apply* will open for submissions at **8:00 AM on Monday, December 2, 2024**, and will close at **11:59 PM on Monday, March 3, 2025**.
- To get started on your application before logging onto *SM Apply*, please use the "Grant Application Planning Guide" found at <https://beyondthebooksbn.com/educators/grant-guidelines>
- Be aware there are different word limits for each required response. These are noted in both the application and the planning guide.
- When the application is complete, the applicant will click the "Mark as Complete" button. The applicant will then complete the "Principal Permission" task by entering their principal's name and email address. This will trigger an email to the principal asking for their approval.
- Once the principal approves the application, it will automatically be submitted to BTBEF.
- The deadline for principal approval/submission is **Monday, March 3, 2025 at 11:59 PM**. Be sure to "Mark as Complete" early enough for your principal to be able to meet this deadline.
- *SM Apply* does **NOT** accept edits or uploads to applications once they are forwarded to the principal for approval.
- Once the application has been automatically submitted, the applicant will receive a confirmation email.

GUIDING CRITERIA FOR ALL GRANT PROPOSALS

- All applications (Beyond the Box, Standard, and Mini) will be scored using the rubrics found at <https://beyondthebooksbn.com/educators/types-of-grants>

- Proposals will be evaluated on:
 - Innovation and creativity
 - Clarity of goals and objectives
 - Impact on student achievement
 - Collaboration with others
 - Effectiveness of teaching strategies
 - Sustainability or justification for a one-time event
 - Evaluation of outcomes
 - Realistic and complete budget that aligns with program goals
- BTBEF is committed to a blind review. Applications that include any name(s) of district(s), school(s), staff member(s) or other identifying information (such as mascot, school colors, etc.) will be 'returned without review'. Careful proofreading will help avoid an application being 'returned without review'. Applications are not reviewed until the deadline has closed so there is no opportunity to rewrite the proposal and remove any identifying information that violates the blind review policy.

BUDGET PREPARATION

MUST INCLUDE:

- A list of every item in your budget. (Do not group items together with general labels such as “books” \$500 or “painting supplies” \$200. Itemize with names & cost of each book, paint brush, etc.)
- Item name, description, and price-per-item for each expenditure.
- Supplier’s estimate (upon request) for any labor costs exceeding \$100.

MUST NOT INCLUDE:

- Compensation for district employees or substitute staff (compensation for outside personnel, such as honorariums, is permitted)
- Professional development expenses (registration fees, travel, lodging, etc)
- Expenses for food, unless it is essential to the success of the project (explain)
- Taxes (school districts have tax-exempt status)

FOUNDATION EXPECTATIONS

- The grant must be used solely for the purpose described in the application.
- Foundation approval **must** be obtained **before** any changes may be made in the scope of the project, or in the recipient.
- Grant winners are to request funds from the business office of their district and the district will administer the disbursement of grant dollars. The Foundation will forward all awarded funds to each district after July 1, 2025.
- Funds must be used during the summer of 2025 or the 2025-2026 school year; otherwise, funds may be forfeited.
- The **Beyond the Box Grant recipient** must, by **September 15, 2026**, submit a complete report of the grant work and outcomes to BTBEF as provided in the award information. This report will be forwarded to the private foundation that sponsors the award.
- **Recipients of a Standard Grant or Mini Grant** will be asked to complete a survey at the end of the 2025-2026 year in order to provide BTBEF with details of the project and process.
- BTBEF appreciates public acknowledgment of the benefits to student learning that is provided through the financial support of the Foundation.
- Printed materials resulting from work carried out under the grant should specifically acknowledge support of the Foundation.

Grant Writing Tips and FAQ’s at <https://beyondthebooksbn.com/educators/grant-guidelines>